When It Rains

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by orphan_account

Summary

He doesn't remember running down the halls, or slipping on the hardwood floors, or catching himself on the doorframe before he runs into a wall.

Instead, he thinks of his racing heart and Hanzo's pained voice crying out in the night.

Notes

A quick thank you to Jordan who gave me permission to use Tumbleweed and the Boofs in this fic <3

See the end of the work for more notes

The low roll of fading thunder in the distance is what ultimately made Jesse blink away from his monitor and finally check the time.

1:38 AM.

He sighs. Did it again, damn it. He was trying to get better at not staying up so late, really he was; but time ain't always the easiest to keep up with, 'specially as the years went by. He could hear Han (rightfully) nagging him about it now. "We're retired, Jesse," his husband will remind him for the umteenth time, "Leave it for the next day. We have time now."

And he's right. *Always is* , he thinks with a fond smile. Knew he married him for a reason.

Stretching back in his chair, he grunts as he feels a deep pop in his back, the kind that make a man feel all loose and limber afterwards. The movement causes the little bundle of fluff on his lap to stirr, Tumbleweed snorting sleepily as she wakes and looks up at him.

Jesse smiles, his hand reaching to scritch behind her ear. "C'mon, hushpuppy. Time for bed."

Her little paws barely make a sound as she jumps off his lap and begins circling his legs as he stands to his feet. He chuckles and gives the monitor one last look. It will be there in the morning, he tells himself. Work could wait.

He watches the screen go dark from inactivity, and clicks his desk lamp off.

That was when he hears strained shouts from the bedroom and his blood runs cold.

He doesn't remember running down the halls, or slipping on the hardwood floors, or catching himself on the doorframe before he runs into a wall. Instead, he thinks of his racing heart and Hanzo's pained voice crying out in the night.

Inside the moonlit bedroom, Jesse could make out a writhing mass in their bed, his husband whimpering and gasping and clutching at the sheets for dear life. He wastes no time rushing to Hanzo's side, flicking on the bedside lamp to his left.

In the light, the full scene is laid out to him. Hanzo's face is scrunched and his body is tensed tight, like a coil ready to snap at the slightest of pressure. His forehead is damp with cold sweat, and he visibly shivers, his teeth bared and chattering loudly in the silence of the room. He twists and twitches in the sheets, but his eyes refuse to open.

A nightmare, and a *bad* one at that.

Jesse puts a hand on Hanzo's shoulder. "Han… Han, wake up," he urges, shaking him gently despite the near-desperate tone of his voice. "Hanzo. *Hanzo!* "

Hanzo's eyes shoot open, wild and frantic and unfocused. He gulps in air like he's never breathed before. Jolting upright, he gives a hoarse shout before clutching his heaving chest, his nails digging into the skin over his heart.

"Han, it's me," Jesse hushes, half-kneeling on the bed beside him. He takes Hanzo's free hand in his own, clutching it like a lifeline. "I'm here, I'm here. Breathe, baby, you gotta breathe."

Hanzo gives staccatoed gasps, his lungs panicked as they fail to make a rhythm to follow.

"Han, I need you to breathe for me." Jesse tries again, placing his right hand over Hanzo's across his chest. The sound of paws on hardwood announce the arrival of Tumbleweed and the Akitas, and Jesse feels the bed dip as Peach and Fluff nose their way into Hanzo's lap.

With careful movements, Jesse pries Hanzo's hand from his chest and sets it down on Peach's head. "We're all here, Hanzo, it's okay. We're all here. Peachie's here. Fluff an' Tums are here. But you gotta *breathe*, darlin'. You gotta breathe for me."

Jesse watches Hanzo's eyes shut again as he takes in another great gulp of air. He presses his lips together firmly and sighs through his nose with a harsh shuddering wheeze. He does it again. And again and again and again, each rasp less forcibly than the last, until he parts his lips and lets out the last of his panicked breath.

When Hanzo opens his eyes again, they are red and glassy, and Jesse meets him halfway when he surges forward to embrace him. His husband gives a muffled rasp into his shirt, his sobs quiet and hoarse, and Jesse tightens his arms around him as Hanzo begins to tremble.

"Jesse..."

"Shh, it's okay, it's okay." He runs a hand up and down Hanzo's back, feeling his own breathing even out. "I gotcha. I gotcha."

Jesse isn't sure how long they stayed like that, holding tight as if the other would vanish if they let go. Even when they do eventually part, neither go far from the other, Jesse keeping a steadying hand on Hanzo's back as they make their way downstairs and into the dimly lit kitchen. His husband veers into the living room without a word, but Jesse can see the tension in his shoulders as he curls up on the sofa with the Akitas.

Too charged to go back to sleep. Too tired to much of anything else. *Tea it is, then.*

The microwave above the stove reads just after 2 AM as Jesse pours the tea, but his limbs tell him otherwise. Everyone looks as tired as they felt, human and dog alike, and Jesse can feel the weight of the night already sinking into his bones.

He wordlessly hands Hanzo the tea, settling against one end of the couch as he took a hesitant sip of his own. It's a bit too bitter, more so than his husband usually likes it. Yet Hanzo makes no mention of it, his eyes distant as he stares at nothing on the wall.

It's been a rough night, all right. He hasn't had too many of 'em himself since retiring, but that just makes the bad ones likes this stand out more. Makes the pain louder and harder to

ignore when it did hit.

Coping had been easier before, when it was just him and a bottle of ol' number seven. When things got real bad, he ran drills, target practice, mindless things to tire himself out. Together, he and Han got better since they had someone to hold 'em after a bad night, but in the end they always fell back on old habits. 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it', right?

But... that was it, wasn't it? It *was* broken. Between cutting back on the liquor and hanging up his gun, Jesse was starting to see that.

He feels bad when he finally breaks the silence. "You doin' okay, darlin'?"

A formality of a question if any, Hanzo's response is a quiet grunt and a shake of his head 'no'. As if sensing his owner's distress, a worried Fluff nudges his head under the man's free hand, and Jesse hears Hanzo's breath hitch before digging his fingers into the soft black fur. On the other side of the couch, Peach looks up at Jesse and Hanzo with big, sad eyes -- a knowing look if a dog could give one.

He sighs, knowing Han wasn't gonna be up for much of a chat tonight. He knows better than to ask what spooked him so bad in those dreams of his, if they were anything like his own. Doesn't mean he ain't still curious, though, if nothing else than to know what he should be saying to help.

Comforting folks was never his strong suit. Sure, he could make a joke to lighten a room, or push someone to spitting out the truth, but telling people what they needed to hear? Reassuring someone they were going to be okay? It was an art he never learned, and now found himself wishing he had.

Jesse sets his tea on the coffee table and sits beside Hanzo, resting a hand gently on his shoulder and turning to face him. "What'll… what'll help you, sugar?"

Hanzo is quiet as he places his own mug on the table and pulls himself into Jesse's chest once more. When he finally does speak, his voice is thin and strained, as if it was holding the weight of the world.

“Stay with me.”

It was said so softly he nearly missed it; all the same, Jesse pulls him forward to rest their foreheads together.

“I’m here.” He promises as he settles them back against the couch. A little huff accompanies the sudden appearance of little Tumbleweed jumping up to join everyone, and she quickly settles herself between them.

Once again, Jesse hears the sound of thunder booming far, far away. Knows it ain’t gonna be long before it starts raining. He’s asleep by the time the first drops hit their window.

When Jesse wakes next, it’s because he realizes he’s alone.

He shifts up, the blanket that had been laid over him slipping from his shoulders as he stands. The room is still dark but not in the same way as it was in the dead of night. Outside, he can hear the rain falling, drumming against the window gently but steadily. The clouds are dark and heavy, selfish as they refuse to let any sunlight peak through.

Jesse startles when he finally sees Hanzo standing just beyond the back porch in the center of their backyard. Soaked to the bone and his hair plastered to his head, Hanzo makes no effort to step out of the rain, instead tilting his head upward to the sky.

The microwave clock reads 5:45 AM, and the light glints off of a solemn-looking bottle of sake and a single porcelain-white cup.

He grits his teeth, grabs the blanket from the couch, and wraps it around himself before stepping outside himself.

The rain itself isn't cold, but it chills the air just enough to make him shiver. Hanzo stands a few feet away and doesn't seem to notice the cold or his husband.

"Hanzo?" Jesse has to shout to be heard over the rain hitting the tin roof of the porch. "What're you doin' out there?"

No response.

"Baby, you're soaked." He pulls the blanket closer to his body. "Makin' me cold just lookin' at'cha."

Still no response.

Jesse swears under his breath and takes a step forward, his barefoot squelching in the muddy earth beyond their porch. "Hanzo!"

A crackling lightning bolt lights up the sky just then. Hanzo spins on his heel, briefly backlit by the flash of light. In that moment, Jesse sees the panicked look in his eyes.

He doesn't wait anymore for a response and trudges out into the rain himself.

By the time he herds the two of them inside, they are drenched from head to two and the bottom of his feet are covered in wet dirt. The blanket is draped over the porch railing for later, too damp to dry either of them off. They're cold and wet and shaking, and Jesse can't help but bring a hand up to run through Hanzo's soaked hair.

"Honey, what was that all about? Why were you out there?" He tucks a wet lock of hair behind Hanzo's ear with a shake of his head. "Scared me, seein' you out there in your pajamas during a storm like that."

“Storms calm me,” Hanzo says in one breath. “Or, they usually do.” He shifts on his feet, and Jesse could now see the mud that clung to his husband’s pants, the joints in his prostheses pocketed with wet earth.

Jesse sighs softly through his nose, and grabs a hand towel from the countertop to start wiping off the worst of the dirt on their feet. He starts to kneel, but feels Hanzo urging them towards the kitchen table, and they sit in silence as Jesse runs the cloth over Hanzo’s legs with unsure movements.

It’s a long time before either speaks. “Y’know, we got this real nice tub upstairs.” It’s not what he should have said and he knows it, but the little joke still makes Hanzo crack a small grin if only for a second. The gesture makes his heart hurt all the more.

When he finally finishes wiping off the worst of the mud, he tosses the rag back onto the kitchen counter and sits back to face his husband, who refuses to meet his gaze. This close, Jesse could smell the alcohol on Hanzo’s breath.

Has it always been such a harsh smell?

Carefully, he takes Hanzo’s hands in his own, rubbing his thumbs over calloused knuckles. Jesse’s mouth feels dry as he asks, “You, uh, you wanna talk about it?”

Hanzo presses his lips into a thin line, and nods with a croaky, “Yes.” Quietly, he adds, “A bath sounds nice right now.”

Jesse smiles, placing a feather-light kiss to his forehead. “You got it, sugar.”

They take their time bathing that morning. Hanzo lounges in the tub while Jesse sits on the edge, washing his husband’s hair with gentle motions. He half-sings a song he heard on the radio as he works through knot after knot of Hanzo’s hair, and makes Hanzo chuckle when he gets the words wrong. The dogs all crowd by the door at the sound of their voices, and they can’t help but smile when Tumbleweed brings her favorite toy over to the bathtub and lays it down in front of them.

Eventually, the rain outside is all but drowned out by the sounds of laughter and kind words.

Jesse knows the storms will come again, just as the two of them will always have rough nights and dreams of loss and tragedies. But when he lies on the couch with Hanzo, his husband wearing one of his old flannels and the dogs cuddled up around them as they watched whatever show was on HV, well…

He likes to think he's found himself a nice umbrella.

End Notes

Thank you for reading! As always, you can find me over at my twitter!

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